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the Commonweal

DOUGLAS HYDE

BRITAIN'S MR. BEVAN

JOHN C. CORT

CASE FOR THE STEELWORKERS

COMPTON MACKENZIE

THREE SCORE AND TEN

volume LVI, number 4, 1952

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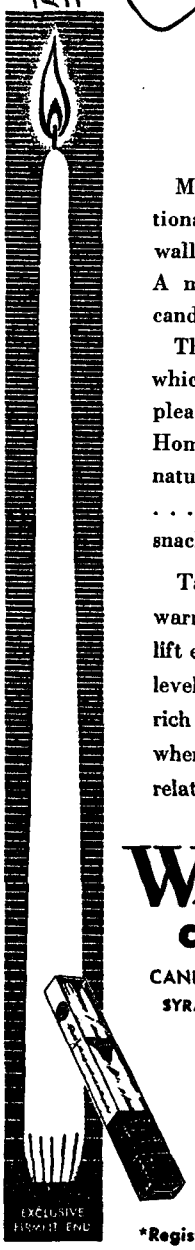

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THE Commonweal

week by week

CATHOLICS AS JURORS

THE right to a fair trial is one of this country's most cherished possessions. It is a national tradition of which we are justly proud. We find it significant that, when a political democracy falls prey to a dictator, protection of the individual citizen before the law is among the first rights to be trampled on.

Moreover, under the Anglo-American legal system a defendant is presumed innocent until he is proved guilty. The opportunity to challenge jurors whose personal prejudices might impede them from rendering a just verdict, on the basis of the law involved and the evidence, is an integral part of our solicitude for the accused.

So there is nothing out of the ordinary in the fact that the prospective jurors for the trial of the sixteen "secondary Communist party leaders" are being challenged and questioned by both defense attorneys and the judge. It is the difficulty in finding men and women who do not seem to be completely swept along by the anti-Communist feeling in this country that makes the search for jurors continue for so long.

In the course of these court preliminaries it is understandable that Catholics as such should serve as a target for the defense attorneys. The Church's position on Communism is known everywhere. Catholics were among the very first to perceive the iniquities of the Bolshevik regime and the threat to human liberties embodied in the Revolution. Communist propaganda and persecutions have been the objects of condemnation in the Catholic press right through the past thirty years. (This diagnosis would have been considerably more effective, by the way, had it involved a more serious attempt to explain the success of the Communist dynamic in many lands.)

Of course Catholics comprise but one group for which strong prejudices about Communists could be adduced. Faithful readers of the Hearst and Scripps-Howard newspaper chains likewise could be cited. Leaders of American business would add up to another comparable group.

It does not seem out of the way to mention here other groups whose prejudices would be at least as strong in a contrary direction. One assuredly would be the uncritical adherents of the American Civil Liberties Union; another the loyal readers of the *Nation;* a third the large assortment of unaffiliated individuals who seek to be viewed as liberals above all else.

In exercising their legal rights of challenge the defense attorneys thus have some surface justification for raising the issue about Catholics as such. There are indeed certain individuals who are so obsessed with the crimes of Communism that they would experience difficulty in conceiving that the accused Communist leaders had not conspired to advocate overthrow by violence of the American Government—even if the evidence at the trial did not sustain the charge.

But there is a danger here. It would be an unhappy precedent if citizens were to be disbarred from passing judgment solely because of their membership in a certain religious group. It is risky to hold that a man's background and beliefs automatically prevent him from weighing evidence, conscientiously reaching a logical conclusion and giving a defendant his due. Should every Jew have been barred from serving on a jury in a Christian Front case, for example, simply because he was a Jew?

Surely here in the United States we have sufficient confidence in the competence and integrity of the individual citizen not to fall for oversimplifications of this kind. A juror's task often involves his rising above his personal prejudices.

MORE ON STEEL

THE opposition we expressed last week to the method of President Truman's seizure of the steel mills enrolled us in a fraternity whose membership is large and, to say the least, diverse. Rarely has a President managed to get so many different people opposed to one of his decisions for so many different reasons, and seldom do people of such

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widely divergent viewpoints find themselves united on an issue.

The reason for our position was a fear of arbitrary state power, not subject to sufficient check or judicial review. But similar reasons were cited by Republican legislators who are currently crying for impeachment proceedings against Mr. Truman. After watching them perform we may be excused for feeling that a strong dash of politics-as-usual is influencing their reasoning and flavoring their rhetoric.

The steel companies themselves are having a field day. The firms involved in the dispute have taken extensive—and expensive—advertising in order to emphasize the extent of editorial opposition to the seizure. Again one gets the strong feeling that much of industry's emotional fervor has little or nothing to do with the broad constitutional issues raised by Mr. Truman's eleventh-hour action.

One issue on which we part company with most of the anti-seizure club is the union shop. Though it has received relatively little attention, this is a key issue in the steel dispute and has a great deal to do with the inflexible attitude displayed by the industry in negotiations. Steel vigorously opposes the union shop and always has. Now the heads of steel insist that the union shop is not a matter on which a government arbitration board may rule, at least not if the decision goes against them.

We disagree. On both sides of the labor-management fence, security is an indispensable key to labor peace. Management would have a hard time bargaining with a revolutionary union out to destroy business. Happily there are few, if any, such unions in this country; certainly the Steelworkers led by Philip Murray cannot be classified this way.

From labor's point of view, stability and responsible leadership are difficult to attain if elected officials and rank-and-file members alike feel that management strongly opposes the continued existence of the union. Union men who think that management is waiting only for a serious recession or an anti-labor administration in order to wage all-out war on their organization are unlikely to view management statements on other subjects with a very sympathetic eye.

This lack of confidence is especially prevalent in an industry like steel where few workers have forgotten with what sacrifice the mills were organized, how recently this was achieved, and with what vigor it was fought by management. In an atmosphere of hostility and suspicion the memory of past bitterness dies hard. By the fervor of their present fight against union security, the steel representatives are doing little to dispel this atmosphere of mistrust.

The union shop is the most popular form of union security. It is favored by the great majority of workers. For the relatively small number in each plant who oppose it certain safeguards for individual rights already exist, and more could be worked out.

The most important point is recognition of the fact that unions play an indispensable part in an industrial society like ours. Like business, they are entitled to certain basic security measures to insure their own continuity. They should not be treated as evils to be tolerated only until a good chance comes along to cripple their effectiveness or to eliminate them entirely.

NEXT WEEK

SERGE HUGHES writes on the religious aspect of Matisse.

"To some extent the difficulty in appreciating the chapel at Vence is due to the acquired mistrust with which our times view a joyful religious art. Rightly or wrongly, we have come to suspect the modern religious writer if he doesn't show some anguish, a certain amount of torment. We now feel disappointed, if not tricked, when a character in a novel does not reveal the proper Dostoyevskian moral convolutions. Our sensitivities respond readily to a sense of apocalypse, sin and violence."

VIOLENCE IN COLOMBIA

ACTS of violence committed by groups of Catholic fanatics against Protestant minorities in Spain have recently been in the news, and now we have word of similar outrages in South America. Newspaper accounts have centered on incidents in Colombia and listed charges ranging from governmental banning of Evangelical radio programs to the stoning of Protestant worshippers in this overwhelmingly Catholic country.

Responsible religious and civic leaders, both Catholic and non-Catholic, have by now gone on record as "deploring" these manifestations of bigotry. We, naturally, join them. If this were all we had to say, then this editorial could have gone unwritten. Our reaction could be taken for granted. But in the very act of deploring, some things have been said, both now and in the past, which we find almost as disturbing as the fanaticism which is deplored. These things, we believe, must be discussed.

We must take issue, for example, with those of our fellow Catholics, both in Latin America and in this country, who "deplore" such incidents—"*but.*" It is this recurrent "but" which bothers us. We think

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it stands for qualifications which must be answered, because they sometimes seem to represent a rationalization of the very thing which is so universally "deplored."

It has been said, for example, that in countries like Spain and Colombia the civil law allows for "freedom of conscience" by granting the right of "private worship." It does not allow dissident minorities a chance to threaten public order by worshipping "in public" and seeking to win converts from the overwhelmingly Catholic majority. So, this argument goes, when Protestant ministers carry their worshipping and preaching into a public domain, when they "proselytize," they are breaking the law of the land. Since this is an essentially civil matter they invite civil prosecutions when they "go too far."

It is further said that, in many instances, the Protestant minorities have invited recriminations by the tone of their propaganda. By deliberately and publicly vilifying the most sacred beliefs of the majority they have constituted a threat to civil order and this has its logical outcome in civil strife. So, the argument goes, even though we must continue to "deplore" the violent turn which events have taken, we must admit that the proselytizers have, in some instances, brought it upon themselves.

These qualifications seem more significant than the pious laments which precede them. They are the real problems which Catholics must face and somehow answer. If they continue to underlie the thinking of many Catholics in the modern world then we're going to have much "deploring" to do in the future—and the deploring will probably be for ourselves. To escape this we must recognize two things.

We must recognize that the problem of the individual conscience in error is a real problem. Although error, as error, has no rights, individuals do have rights, and error, as error, never exists in the abstract; it is always concretized in the conscience of an individual. One of the functions of civil regimes is to guarantee a climate wherein the natural rights of the individual can be realized. Pope Pius XII has listed the right "to worship God in public and private" as a fundamental human right, common to all men. The problem is thus much too complex to be covered by a simple "error has no rights" philosophy of the state.

Catholics, then, rather than seeming to justify suppression of non-Catholic propaganda on the grounds that, in a particular Catholic country, it is contrary to civil law, might better attempt to revaluate the problem of civil regimes (even so-called "Catholic" ones) which through such laws continue to violate the rights of the individual and thus invite the very civil disobedience which is now deplored in Spain and Colombia.

We must further admit that no matter what the provocation (and undoubtedly the case is not clearly a black and white one) no excuse can be given for violent mob action against religious minorities. The Catholic answer, in this case, must be to pray for the blasphemer, not to persecute him. When a group of fanatics, Catholic or otherwise, resorts to force and violence, it must be condemned. No "provocation" can excuse it.

And Catholics should be the first to condemn these things. There should be no "buts" attached to the revulsion which the Catholic conscience feels when it sees bigotry, hatred and darkness being imposed in the name of truth.

HIGHER PROPS

NOW that Governor Stevenson's refusal to serve as a presidential candidate this year has brought Democratic prospects to a new low, the Administration appears amenable to extreme measures. If that party can settle on an acceptable candidate, it still has a good chance in the South. The labor vote and Northern city machines still look pretty solid. The farmer continues to prosper but his vote is not clearly in the bag.

Four years ago it was the farm vote that supplied the deciding element in Mr. Truman's upset victory. To call for policies which will keep rural areas in the Democratic fold is political strategy of a clearly elementary sort.

Senator Robert S. Kerr of Oklahoma, one of the early candidates, took about as big a stride possible in this direction by demanding crop supports of one hundred per cent of parity—to replace the present sliding scale of seventy-five to ninety per cent. It is inconceivable that any candidate of either party can outbid him.

Secretary of Agriculture Brannan opposed the Kerr scheme on the grounds that it would raise the support rates on twenty basic farm commodities and give such an impulsion to inflation that the farmer himself would lose out in the end. But the pressure was mounting. Secretary Brannan has now seconded Mr. Truman in calling for an end to the sliding scale. He would peg supports on corn, cotton, peanuts, rice, tobacco and wheat at a flat ninety per cent of parity.

His argument cuts across party lines. It is not too dissimilar from the case made today by the steel producers. That should not be surprising. For the dominant elements in the powerful farm bloc are no longer the traditional American small farmers but rather large operators who are essentially big business men.

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EACH HIS OWN

IT all begins when they take you, an infant, to the baptismal font. The priest pours the water and says the words, you either cry or sleep soundly through the ceremony (afterwards the new godmother gives a full report), and when it is all over they take you home again, a Catholic. In the mystical, theological sense it is re-birth, a second birth coming so soon after the first that you grow up never knowing what it is not to be all you are.

Later maybe you get a little philosophy and formulate some abstract idea of "to be," but usually you *are* for quite a spell before giving it much thought. *To be* for you is to be yourself: a boy not a girl, a member of this or that family in this or that place, an American and a Catholic. It all seems to go together, the pieces locking tight.

There are, you learn first, little girls as well as little boys—and this is a challenging, exciting idea that never loses its freshness, however you try to come to terms with it. Soon after leaving the nursery you discover that the kid next door has someone he calls mother, that she is to him what your mother is to you, only not in the same way, and that at his house they do things a little differently.

One day they take you on a little trip and you ask a lot of questions—something happens that day. You get a picture book: it seems some people live in the country, others live in small towns, there are millions like you who live in big cities, these cities are scattered over the globe, and all these people are richly variegated—black, brown, yellow skins and some who are white like you; round eyes and slant eyes; the sort of differences that goodwill groups say should not matter, but obviously do.

You go to school and read other books and learn about the past. Not only the world but time itself is peopled with human variety. The word "human" expresses what you have in common with the men of far-off places and far-off times; the word "variety" bespeaks what you don't share and can never wholly share. You can go off to China and try to be Chinese, but you can do nothing about your eyes if they are round and blue. You can travel to North Africa and live in the desert, eating and dressing like the natives, as Father Foucauld did. But then, after you die they will write books about you and say that you traveled to North Africa and dressed, ate and lived like the natives.

No man can wholly escape his own place and time, which is just another way of saying that however keen the sense of exile a man can not escape himself. The American in Europe who avoids the tourist places does not thereby become a European; he becomes one of those Americans who avoid the tourist places.

This page began with a reference to infant baptism; the beginnings of a Catholic, the beginnings of a difference. It began as an idea before that when the writer read about the most recent attacks on the parochial school system as being undemocratic and divisive and a reaction began churning in his mind. I was going to write about that, and then I realized that on such a question it is important who you are, and what you were.

When Dr. Conant of Harvard speaks deprecatingly of the parochial school in American life, that is one thing—the parochial school, I suspect, is an abstraction to Dr. Conant. To me and people like me it is something else again, a reality with very many moving associations; for us the parochial school has a meaning immediate and personal. If a debate (highly unlikely) should ensue we would probably end up talking about two quite different things—President Conant of the abstract image he has formed, I of a particular red-brick building at which I appeared in class for what seemed like an eternity of years.

There are private schools and private schools. In New York there is a Catholic school for rich kids (who later will go to Harvard), whose parents feel they would be conspicuous at the parish schools. There are other Catholic children in the United States growing up in bigotry-infested areas where to be a Catholic and go to a Catholic school is like being a foreigner, an intruder. There you have the exclusive and the excluded.

But when I think about the parochial school I am thinking of something else again—the places where Catholics breathed easily (maybe too easily) and the parish school was as familiar and accepted as the local grocery, blending easily into the local background.

The public school and our parochial school were very close; the two school yards backed up on one another. Every kid in the neighborhood went to either one or the other. When we played school these were the places we had in mind (both were taken very much for granted) and depending on who was teacher it was either the Catholic school—then "teacher" wore a torn curtain on her head and went under a polysyllabic name—or the local public school. To think that one was more American than the other, more native to the community than the other, would have seemed the sheerest nonsense to us and our neighbors.

JOHN COGLEY.

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Britain's Mr. Bevan

THE CONSERVATIVES' BOGEYMAN IS BIGGER THAN HIS BOGEY—AND PERHAPS A MUCH GREATER DANGER

DOUGLAS HYDE

SOMEWHERE, in some ultra-Conservative corner of England, there is probably a nursemaid who, when her little charges seem to be getting out of hand, threatens them by saying: "If you are not good children Aneurin Bevan will get you."

For the Conservative party bosses, backed by an enthusiastic press, believe that the best way in which they can impress the electorate with all that is dangerous and wrong in the socialist creed is to personify it in the shape of one of its left-wing leaders. It used to be sharp-tongued Professor Harold J. Laski. Then Laski died and they switched the role of bogeyman, fairly logically, to Aneurin Bevan, the man who last year resigned a Ministry on the ground that he was not prepared to see social services sacrificed in the interests of rearmament.

This big, fifty-four year old Welsh ex-miner, whose thick grey hair and shaggy eyebrows make him vaguely reminiscent of John L. Lewis, is presented to the public as a scheming demagogue, a dangerous wild man who would lead his country to Bolshevism through irresponsible policies. But Bevan is bigger than his bogey, as his political testament, *In Place of Fear,* just published in the United States, reveals. Indeed, one of the book's most useful functions may prove to be that it will enable both his friends and his foes to estimate the size and stature of the man, something which is necessary for he may possibly one day be Britain's Prime Minister, leading a Government of his own choosing.

The fact is that except for those who have met him or who have been directly associated with the movement of which he is an increasingly significant part, few people have been able to see the real man for the bogey. This has worked both ways, for among members of his own party there have been some who have been drawn to him in reaction to what they have felt was a campaign of malicious misrepresentation. When Bevan last staged a revolt against his party's leaders in the House of Commons, for example, two Catholics were among the "rebel" socialist M.P's.

The Labor Party has had many irresponsible and colorful rebels, but Bevan has a depth and significance which the others lacked. From the whole of his thought it is obvious that a socialist party which was led by him and which shared his philosophy would be one which was fundamentally all but indistinguishable from those European socialist parties which long ago fell under the Church's ban. It would be quite unlike the present Labor Party, both in theory and in practice.

A Catholic friend of mine who had just finished reading a prepublication copy of Bevan's book but who had never met its author, expressed surprise at its nature on three counts: at its restraint, for he had expected nothing more than demagogy; at the fact that the reasoning and the vocabulary are those of a thoughtful, well-read man, and that a Welshman, of all people, should show not the slightest recognition of man's spiritual needs. That, however, is precisely what anyone who understands Bevan and the British Labor Movement would expect of him.

Writing of the period when, as Minister of Health in the first post-war Labor Government he was trying to get the doctors to accept the idea of nationalized medicine, Bevan says:

"My trade union experience had taught me to distinguish between the atmosphere of the mass demonstration and the quite different mood of the negotiating table."

Like many politicians, Bevan operates at two levels but it happens that he does both rather more successfully than most. At the big trade union demonstration, or during a heated House of Commons debate, he may come out in his role of demagogue. But at the negotiating table, in committee, at the serious meeting of his followers or in his writing for long-term consumption, he can be the well informed man making out a carefully reasoned case.

BORN in a once beautiful South Wales valley, the loveliness of which was sacrificed at the altar of rising industrialism's twin gods, coal and steel, Bevan is essentially the product of a proletarian society. When he talks of humanity, he is thinking in terms of nameless

Mr. Hyde, who before his conversion was editor of the London Daily Worker, is now on the staff of the English Catholic Herald.

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masses, not of individuals. His very solutions are part of the problem which they are intended to combat.

When he left school at fourteen he went straight to work in the mines, at a moment of bitter class struggle throughout the industry. As an adolescent he attended adult education courses, held in working men's clubs and run by left-wing organizations. There, in endless argument, he acquired a breadth of learning which some find surprising when they meet him for the first time in his book.

Then came the years of mass unemployment when the skill of the miners and steel workers went to waste, the once-busy valleys became derelict and the unemployed dreamed and talked of revolution.

By the time the still-young Aneurin Bevan reached the House of Commons in 1929, with the backing of the miners' union, and representing his own valley, Ebbw Vale, he had a political philosophy which had been molded by that background. To that background has now been added twenty-five years of uninterrupted experience as an M.P. in one of the safest Labor seats in Parliament.

Bevan is not, as his opponents have sometimes suggested, either a Communist or a fellow-traveler. In the early days of the last war the Government banned the *Daily Worker* on which I was then working. A campaign was at once started to demand that the ban should be raised, and Aneurin Bevan was invited to take part in it. But it was only after resolutions had been passed in the name of millions of trade unionists and when Bevan was in danger of isolating himself from what had become a popular movement among his own supporters that he consented to do so.

He came to a meeting which I had organized, but he refused to discuss beforehand what he proposed saying from the platform or even to associate with any of the other speakers. He swept the audience off its feet with his speech, based on the need for press freedom, then went his way without a word.

That is typical of his attitude toward the Communists. He ignores them for as long as he can, but if they wage a successful campaign he will climb in on it for his own purposes and on his own terms. He believes that his brand of socialism cuts the ground from under the feet of Communism. The real point, however, is whether there would be any marked difference between the two in practice.

"One thing I must make clear," he writes of the social reforms introduced by the Labor Government. "British socialists were not preoccupied with Communism. What we did was not done to combat the Kremlin." That, in his own case at least, I would say is true. To him Communists are people to be used when they cannot be ignored. But inevitably this has led on more than one occasion to his being used by the Communists. Translated into terms of international politics his attitude could, if he were Prime Minister, be still more dangerous.

In the whole of his recent book he makes no more than four or five references to religion, the Church and spiritual matters, and in each case he writes in the past tense. This is not a coincidence; his choice of tense reflects his attitude to religion which, Marxist-fashion, he says is a "consolation" belonging to the days of terror before man had conquered the physical elements.

"The physical sciences have triumphed to such a degree," he writes, "that the ancient sources of terror have almost ceased to preoccupy his psyche." There is no evidence whatever of religion's preoccupying Mr. Bevan's psyche. To him religion is a reactionary force which has no place in the mind of a twentieth-century man. But in rejecting Christianity he has also rejected that Christian conception of the worth of the individual which is the only safeguard against totalitarianism left to twentieth-century man. His reasoning begins with the masses, not with man.

TRADITIONALLY the British socialist movement has lacked any really coherent philosophy. Composed of trade unions, local Labor parties, cooperative organizations and a variety of socialist propagandist bodies bound together on a federal basis, it has organized the most diverse types of people and has tried to speak for them all.

This elasticity of appeal is a source of strength in that it enables the party, despite its socialist label, to attract a wide range of followers and to spread its net wide at election times. But it also lays it wide open for domination by any group which has a popular policy, supported by a well defined philosophy.

A battle for the soul of the party is today in progress. "British socialism," it has been said, "owes more to Methodism than to Marx." Certainly most of its founders were men who had been profoundly influenced by Christian thought.

There was always a minority of members who had been influenced by Marx, but the dominant trend was consistently Christian and leadership was always in the hands of anti-Marxists. But the recent tendency has been for the number of agnostic intellectuals in its top strata to increase, particularly among Members of Parliament. It is to them first and foremost that Bevan makes his intellectual appeal. But his current policy on defense, based on the claim that an over-assessment of Soviet military power is as dangerous as an under-assessment, is one which, as Britain's economic difficulties increase, is likely to have a growing appeal to the trade unionists who wield a decisive influence at the party's conferences.

In Place of Fear is an attempt to provide this great millions-strong movement with a political philosophy

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which would change its entire character and at the same time establish Bevan as the theoretician of the new British socialism. "In so far as I can be said to have had a political training at all," he writes, "it has been in Marxism."

The philosophy with which he would equip British socialism is a diluted form of Marxism, just as surely as was the thought of Bebel, Kautsky or Plekhanov. But because they began as Marxists it was recognized that theirs was but a revised Marxism which, from the Church's point of view, was as pernicious as ever.

But the Marxism of Bevan is not so apparent, for his name is associated in people's minds with the British democratic tradition. Yet like theirs it is atheistic and is a message of class-war, bearing all the hallmarks of its Marxist origins. His approach to every question, like that of the Communists, is economic. "Freedom," he says in a typical passage, "is the by-product of economic surplus."

He does not, like the Communists, call for revolution. But he is a democrat only because he thinks that Party democracy is capable of adaptation to socialist purposes and can be used as the instrument of a class—his class. Fundamentally this approach differs little from the Soviet conception of the state but it is presented in the phrases of social democracy. His language is that of parliamentary democracy, the thought behind it is that of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

If Aneurin Bevan succeeds in his aim, then the British Labor Party will break with its own tradition and step instead into the tradition of the anti-clerical socialist parties of the European continent. In the long view, it is not the bogey-Bevan, the irresponsible demagogue, but Bevan the restrained, convincing British neo-Marxist thinker who is the greatest danger.

Whether he succeeds in his self-appointed task will depend very largely upon how far Christians in his party, Catholics in particular, see the danger and take action against it. For if its loose organization makes it liable to domination by men of this type, it equally makes it possible for the party, like others, to be won for Christian principles and policies, provided that the Christians work with as much determination and are equally clear about where they are going.

COMING

The Commonweal's

Spring Book Number

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The Case for The Steelworkers

THE union and the public would be the fall-guys. Phil Murray, president of the CIO Steelworkers, had served notice that the men would strike on April 8th if Big Steel didn't come across. So Big Steel told the government, "Give us a price increase—and make it good—or we'll let the union strike until hell freezes over." If the government gave the big price increase, as it did in 1946 after a four-week strike, the public would pay the bill and labor take the blame. For this was free enterprise à la U. S. Steel.

On April 8th the U. S. government, at President Truman's order, seized the steel mills rather than allow this to happen.

This is how the play developed. The Steelworkers' contracts ran until December 31st, 1951. Despite the considerable rise in the cost of living and the fact that the steelworkers were lagging behind the auto workers and miners in wages and other conditions (no paid holidays, for example) the steel companies responded to their demands with the even-handed reply: "No wage increase and no price increase."

THIS was statesmanship of a high order. It gave the appearance of a sacrifice in the public interest and it prepared the ground nicely for a full scale campaign to blame labor for the inevitable price increase. The public could not be expected to know that steel profits were fat. In fact, with a little judicious handling of the figures the public might be expected to believe that the steel companies were just getting by on a good old American "fair profit" of about 6%.

For example, the 1951 figures supplied by three major steel companies were trustingly printed as follows in the Boston *Globe* for March 28, 1952:

"United States Steel Co. . . . net income on sales 5.2% (1950 net income on sales 7.3%); net earnings $184,359,787; earnings per share, $6.10 (1950 earnings per share $7.29).

"Youngstown Sheet & Tube . . . net income on sales 6.3%; earnings per share $9.15 (1950 earnings per share $12.12).

"Inland Steel Co. . . . net income on sales 6.6% (1950 net income on sales 8.3%); earnings per share $7.02 (1950 earnings per share $7.76)."

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THERE it was in black and white—a very reasonable profit, and considerably less than 1950 too. Could poor old John Q. Public, reading this as he swayed on his strap on the way home from work, tired and befogged, be expected to know that he was being taken? Could John Q. be expected to know that the idea of calculating net income as a percentage of sales was a cute dodge dreamed up by the NAM a few years back and designed for no other purpose than to kid himself, John Q. Public?

Could John Q. be expected to turn to the financial page and note that the closing prices on a share of stock for these three companies were: U. S. Steel 39 1/8; Youngstown 46 3/8; and Inland 47 1/2? And could he be expected further to figure out a more accurate approximation of these companies' profit percentage on the basis of these figures?

I am almost as ignorant as John Q. Public. I don't know the true profit picture either, but in an effort to be fair I looked up the N. Y. *Times* for March 29, which has more complete information and tells you that a share of U. S. Steel ranged in 1951-'52 from $37 5/8 per share to $47 3/4. From this and the current price, leaning over backwards, you estimate the average price of a share for 1951 at about $42. The Boston *Globe* says the dividend was $6.10, which is a return on the value of investment of 14.5%. This is slightly better than the 5.2% that U. S. Steel has sold the Boston *Globe* and tried to sell you. In the same way you figure Inland Steel is making about 13.2% profit, not 6.6%. And Youngstown, lucky fellow, is making about 17.6% profit and trying hard to palm it off on the public as 6.3%.

SO where was I? The steel companies, out of their heartfelt concern for the public interest, offered the union nothing. When Murray and the Steelworkers threatened a strike on January 1st of this year, President Truman stepped in and persuaded them to postpone it while the dispute was referred to the Wage Stabilization Board for fact-finding and recommendations. The hearings that followed took several months and both the union and the steel industry presented exhaustive briefs.

The WSB is a government agency made up of six industry members, six labor members (three AFL and three CIO) and six public members. These latters are appointed by the President and are mostly professors of economics and other relatively impartial experts on labor-management relations.

The chairman is Nathan P. Feinsinger, former professor of law at the University of Wisconsin who has been doing labor mediation work for the government since World War II. On March 20, after an all-night session of the Board, Feinsinger collapsed from exhaustion at 7 a.m. With a few hours sleep he was back in session at 2 p.m. and that night at 10 p.m. a majority decision was announced. The industry members dissented violently, calling the recommendations "unfair and inequitable," "absurd" and "entirely antagonistic to the principles of stabilization."

The recommendations were:

- A wage increase of 12 1/2 c an hour retroactive to January 1, another 2 1/2c starting July 1 and another 2 1/2c starting next January 1, 1953.
- Contract running for 18 months, until July 1st, 1953.
- A union shop, the exact form to be negotiated.
- Reduction of present Southern wage differential from 10c an hour to 5c.
- Increase in shift differentials of 2c to 3c.
- Six paid holidays.
- Three weeks vacations after 15 years instead of 25 years.

The WSB figured the fringe benefits to be worth "slightly more than 5c an hour." That made the total package worth about 23c an hour *as of January 1, 1953.*

THESE recommendations seemed good for the Steelworkers. Whether they were inflationary, whether the decision was a break-through of WSB regulations—on these questions the answers differed widely. Frankly, I have no access to information that would give me the answers. The public members of the WSB have said "no."

Senior executives of eleven major steel producers met in New York the next day and denounced the recommendations as "inconceivable . . . disruptive . . . go far beyond the board's existing regulations . . . would completely wreck the Government's stabilization program . . ."

Using their own arithmetic, they estimated the direct cost as not 23c but 30c and, without bothering to explain, said that this would increase total costs by 60c per employee hour. The total bill, they said, would be one billion dollars a year, which would amount to $12 a ton.

On the question of the union shop, which would of course cost them exactly nothing, the Big Steel executives were outraged. This was "a long step backward in the struggle for individual freedom," they intoned solemnly in their statement from the upper slopes of the Empire State Building.

Of all the pious bilge! The union shop would permit the steel companies to hire anyone they wish wherever they wish. It would require those hired to join the union within thirty days, but no one could be fired unless he deliberately and consistently refused to pay his dues.

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As a union official who has sweat everything but blood over the problem of persuading selfish, greedy, ignorant human beings to stop being free riders and contribute their just share to the upkeep of an organization that wins them periodic raises, security, and other benefits, I am in a splendid position to tell you that this pose of the basic steel industry is so much baloney. They cannot find any basis in moral principle for their self-righteous opposition to the union shop because there is none. (See Msgr. John A. Ryan's article in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* for discussion of the moral issue.)

SO far it is hard to tell whether the steel industry will succeed in its holdup of the U. S. Government for a price increase beyond what it actually needs to cover the WSB recommendation and still make a reasonable profit. Charles E. Wilson, Director of Defense Mobilization, has now resigned with a blast at Truman because the President has proven reluctant to go along with the heist.

Ellis Arnall, the former liberal governor of Georgia and now successor to Mike DiSalle as head of the Office of Price Stabilization, has thrown his weight behind the President. And the reports are that Roger L. Putnam, the Economic Stabilizer, has done likewise. This would be in keeping with the record of Mr. Putnam, a former Democratic Mayor of Springfield and one of the more progressive Catholic businessmen in the United States.

But the key man is still Mr. Truman, the retiring President. Let us hope he has one good fight left in his system.

This has been a rather angry piece, perhaps not entirely objective. Steelworkers make an average of $72.40 a week. Perhaps I should, but I cannot find it in me to begrudge them another $5 a week now, another $1 July 1 and still another $1 next January. I know how hard it is to raise a family in what Pius XI called "reasonable comfort" on that kind of money, even though it is more than the average American worker makes.

It does make me mad to hear the steel operators crying about the union shop as "a long step backward." It makes me mad to hear them saying that they must have price increases to cover every penny of the increased costs as though they were operating right next to the margin of subsistence. Finally, it makes me mad to see them conning the American public with phony profit figures to create the impression they are just getting by when the truth is that they are making a killing.

Frankly, I hope the United Steelworkers *and* the U. S. government give them a hard time.

JOHN C. CORT.

FROM FRANCE

The Stakes in The Indochinese War

WHENEVER we French get bad news from Indochina it sets us thinking. When we consider all we need for reconstruction in France, our financial and political difficulties, our meager standard of living and the terrific cost of rearming, we can't help wondering. Is it worth spending six hundred billion francs a year, tying up seven thousand officers, thirty thousand non-coms and a hundred and fifty thousand troops more than nine thousand miles from the French borders (we lose each year the equivalent of the graduating class at St. Cyr, the French West Point)—when in the end, and despite everything we can do, we are going to be thrown out of Indochina? If the international situation were not what it is, it would be folly to keep on fighting.

We French know that this war is not a black-and-white case and that we are as responsible for it, if not more so, than the Vietnamese. Over a period of time most Frenchmen have made some very simple discoveries. The first is that the idyllic picture of French colonization as it is presented in our school books hardly corresponds to the realities. To be sure, French planters, pioneers, doctors, missionaries and teachers developed Vietnam. The average life expectancy there has increased. We have opened hospitals, built roads and port facilities and even produced works of art in Indochina. "But we could have done all this as well without you," the Vietnamese tell us.

And thus begins an endless discussion. But let us not reopen that old debate between colonial peoples and colonizers. What is sure is that nations with colonies have a certain feeling of guilt today; they are often startled to discover that Western colonization not only brought enlightenment but also has its dark side.

WHAT causes the greatest popular concern—and this is the second discovery—is that the French Government has been unable to recognize that in consequence of what happened between 1940 and 1945 the era of French rule there was over. This people, who had been so loyal under the Japanese occupation, had to be given its independence. They well deserved it and they were ready for it. We French still had a strong trump card in 1945. The France which came to

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power in 1944 was, in the eyes of the Vietnamese, the France of the Resistance, the same as that of 1789. And great hopes arose when the provisional government put an end to the obscurantist policy of the French administration.

Actually the same thing which plagued our homeland proved to be our ruination in Indochina: the lack of a stable government with the will and the ability to pursue a consistent policy. For a long time France wavered between a policy of reconquest and one of coming to an agreement with the Vietnamese. Unable to choose one or the other, it adopted both simultaneously.

Thus it was possible at the same time (and I think with the same degree of good faith) to carry on negotiations with the President of Viet-Minh, Ho-chi-Minh, who was invited to stay in France, and to create an independent Cochin-China, contrary to signed agreements, and to reoccupy the public buildings of Saigon. The fuse was lighted with the bloody disorders at Hanoi in December, 1946, which marked the beginning of Ho-chi-Minh's rebellion. We had thus spoiled a unique chance to grant Vietnam the political independence she claimed and still defend our essential economic, cultural and strategic interests, which Vietnam was quite ready to guarantee.

The third discovery is that this war, which was presented to us five years ago as a small punitive expedition against a few fomentors of disorder, was in fact the war of the Vietnamese people, almost to a man, against a France they saw as an oppressive colonial power.

We were amazed to learn from newsreel photos and the dispatches of journalists on the scene that it was not safe for our soldiers to appear on the streets of Saigon and that shipments between cities had to be protected by military convoys. Where our troops were quartered the population was quiet. But Viet-Minh infiltrated there. Everything indicated that if our troops left, the people would hail the Viet-Minh forces as liberators. In the Tonkin delta when Hoa Binh was evacuated recently the number of Ho-chi-Minh adherents greatly increased.

Under such conditions it is sheer folly to believe that it is still possible to achieve a solution by force of arms. The war has already cost us thirty thousand lives and three times as many wounded. Everyone admits that the Bao Dai Vietnam Army we have been trying to put in the field is a myth. It consists only of a few battalions with very few officers. It would take years to build it up and requires officers needed in France for the reconstitution of our army. There is also the bitter realization that the material aid promised by the United States has not reached the quantity expected. Deliveries are about a year behind. In contrast, the Viet Minh battalions and divisions are armed, equipped, supplied with food and "advised" by the Chinese Communists. Everything converges to convince French opinion that the war in Indochina is a hopeless venture.

We wonder whether we are not being duped. For while thousands of our brothers are being killed in Indochina to assure Vietnam her independence once and for all, we see growing in Europe the danger of a German rearmament which would never exist if we were able to put in the field at home a force of twenty divisions.

THAT is the reasoning, simplified to be sure, of the man in the street in France; at long last it is beginning to reach our leaders in public life. Several months ago Edouard Daladier raised the cry in the Chamber of Deputies. The fact that Daladier's name is still linked with Munich did not prevent his words from making a profound impression. "We must end the war in Indochina," he declared. "And the only solution is an internationalization of the conflict—to get the UN to assure an armistice, then a truce, and finally a plebiscite, province by province."

Politically this would be a very harsh blow for our French Union. The whole edifice we are trying to support in North Africa come what may would be in danger of tumbling. We face the fact—and Americans must face it too—that the departure of France, if that were ever forced, would mean the communization of all Southeast Asia. The defense of that area, the Indochina peninsula, is as important as Korea. With Viet Minh (that is to say Communism) master of Vietnam, Siam, Burma, Malaya, the Indies and all the Near East would collapse like a house of cards.

A second possible solution would be the internationalizing of the war, with international contingents fighting alongside the French-Vietnamese troops against Viet Minh. Such a solution would have to take into account that Communist China would support the latter. But this would risk an intensification of Chinese intervention and evolution toward a general war. The threat of American air and naval reprisals in case of a Chinese invasion is probably for the moment all that can be proposed that would be more effective as a means of internationalizing the conflict.

It is probable that if France demanded the transfer to the UN of her military responsibilities that organization would doubtless entrust her with continuing the struggle in the UN's name and under its control. Without being freed of her burden France would thus have lost whatever political and moral face she now has in Vietnam.

THERE is the third solution of political internationalization, the internationalizing of a peace. That is the thesis of Daladier, Meudes-France and the Social-

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ists, to which I have referred. The idea would be to ask UN intervention in order to bring about peace negotiations. But can that solution be seriously defended? I doubt it. In fact such discussions would inevitably end in taking up all the problems pending in Southeast Asia—Korea, Formosa and the admission of Communist China to the UN.

With whom would these negotiations take place? With Ho-chi-Minh? But he is only a pawn pushed forward by the Cominform on the chessboard of Southeast Asia. Any real negotiations, as the supporters of internationalization admit, would have to be with Mao-tse-tung. All the unsettled questions would therefore be involved, questions which American statesmen do not want to take up right now. The Korean negotiations show that neither Stalin nor Mao appears to favor closing down a front which they find so useful in pinning down armed forces far from home and paralyzing the rearming of the West.

Then what is to be done? Negotiate directly with Ho-chi-Minh on a national basis? A number of good people assert that old Uncle Ho, although trained in Moscow, nevertheless retains his nationalist reflexes and is fearful of Chinese ambitions to make a vassal of Vietnam. These men recall that at different stages the rebel government did actually attempt to reach the French government and begin negotiations for an armistice and peace. If Viet Minh has received reinforcements for several months, they say, the Indochinese Communists are at the same time badly spent by the long war; they would almost certainly be receptive to any offers of negotiations made by the French-Vietnamese.

Obviously such a policy would incur risks. It would mean tearing down the edifice of the Bao Dai government and administration, which we have so painfully built up during the past few years. We should not forget that during the Chinese civil war the Marshall truce weakened Chiang-kai-shek and helped Mao-tse-tung. Although Ho's desire to negotiate seems genuine enough, is he the real power in Viet Minh policy? Would not Communist elements of Chinese or Moscow formation, while accepting a truce, not profit by the occasion to mount an offensive for a propitious moment?

Whatever the risks, many Frenchmen hold in principle that this is the only chance left to put an end to a war which threatens at any moment to degenerate into a conflict of the Korean type, with the intervention of China. In that case we would witness a general massacre of all French troops.

ANY way we turn we are confronted with an impasse. The only way out we see may well be a trap. But there are moments in the histories of nations when they must remain unshakable in situations for which there is no way out, bravely awaiting the collapse of a section of the wall. That is where we French stand now.

We cannot win a military victory; every increase in our forces, we realize, would be met by a corresponding increase in Chinese aid. We cannot lose this war either. By that I mean that we do not have the right to lose it. We no longer have the right to abandon the field, even supposing that we could.

It is no longer a question of defending material interests in Indochina. The billions of dollars that France has expended in this campaign exceed all that the soil of Indochina has ever produced for the benefit of a few large planters and the Bank of Indochina. What our soldiers are defending in the rice paddies of Tonkin and the pestilence-ridden marshes of the Joncs plain is quite simply the free world and the community of civilized nations.

At times the free peoples have fought for this cause badly—in employing the frightful weapons of modern war. It is very difficult to defend the Indochina war before Annamite students in Paris when they allude to napalm incendiary bombs, native villages destroyed by fire and hostages excuted. But war is war. And our soldiers certainly have no love for it. To understand this all you need do is read some of the excerpts from letters from combat men in Indochina which are being published in France these days. Our soldiers are fighting now only in order to fulfil a solemn promise to leave a free and independent Vietnam on the Indochina peninsula.

We are thus stuck with a war that we detest. But we must wait for, desire, promote every occasion for bringing this conflict to an end, without having any illusions about the chances for success. For Ho-chi-Minh to grasp the outstretched hand would require nothing less than revolutionary changes in Paris. It would mean the forming of a government of the Left, by definition hostile to the Atlantic Pact and to German rearmament and favorable to the resumption of negotiations with Moscow and Peking. But we know that Washington will never support such a government, especially in an American election year.

What is needed, then, is for an energetic French government to speak boldly and clearly to its Atlantic allies, especially to the United States, in words like these: "It is the community of free nations that France is defending in Indochina. She is doing this without sparing either her blood or her treasure. She is doing this against her own interests, which demand that she concern herself first of all with her own rearming and her domestic recovery. The community of nations must recognize the sacrifices France has made and is making. They must not be miserly about giving aid—immediate and on a large scale."

ROBERT BARRAT.

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THE SCREEN

FRIED FREUD

MOVIEGOERS looking for the unusual will find their fare in a group of recently imported films. From Sweden comes "Miss Julie," an extraordinarily handsome production based on Strindberg's morbid little play about a frustrated girl. You can hardly blame Julie for some of her wacky ideas about life. Her father was so disappointed at not having a son that he raised Julie as a boy; her mother believed so strongly in the emancipation of women that she refused to marry Julie's father and after his attempted suicide she took over the child's education, making it even more unbalanced.

Most of the action takes place on the father's large and beautiful estate, in 1888. With the master away, the servants are celebrating St. John's Eve complete with Maypole, flowing liquor and ribald revelry that sets a tone of midsummer madness. Miss Julie, tied in knots because her fiancé has just walked out on her (through her own fault), gets a yen for her father's valet. The love affair, doomed from the start by the difference in their social positions as well as by their strange backgrounds (he hopes to use Julie to rise above his menial position), ends in tragedy. If it weren't that this play predated most of Freud's writings, one would think that Strindberg was trying to out-Freud Freud. The girl is as neurotic as they come —and so are most of the characters surrounding her. Although Strindberg's gloomy psychology and the caste themes seem somewhat outmoded now, they are by no means without interest.

The photography in "Miss Julie" is unusually good. The flashbacks to Julie's and the valet's childhood are handled so skillfully (as they were in "Death of a Salesman," which was made later) that the continuity is never broken; the tie between childhood incidents and their present aftermath is visualized with extraordinary clarity. Director Alf Sjoberg (who also wrote the script) has directed his cast well, and from Anita Bjork, who plays the tortured Julie, he gets a flawless performance. I'm not sure that Strindberg's motifs are fit material for the movies, but as an example of cinematic technique, "Miss Julie" is outstanding.

AN IMPORT from England, "The Man in the White Suit," is as cheerful as "Miss Julie" is depressing. Actually the underlying meaning in this thoughtful satire isn't funny at all and should make many a man pause and ask why *don't* we have razor blades that never wear out or autos that run on cheap gasoline. Alec Guinness, portraying a brilliant research chemist, invents a cloth that lasts forever and never gets dirty. His girl (Joan Greenwood), who also happens to be the daughter of the owner of the mill (Cecil Parker), is sure that the chemist is a knight in shining armor. But neither of these two babes in the woods is very wise about modern civilization. Capital and Labor unite against the invention: "What about the mills, the sheep farmer, the cotton grower?" And the chemist, dressed in the first suit made of the everlasting thread, becomes the pursued victim of our times.

Alexander MacKendrick has directed all this with tongue in cheek, kidding industrialists, workers, rich, poor, wise and naive. Alec Guinness is the lovable boobie, the Chaplinesque clown who knows he is right yet can't buck the moneyed interests. But he won't be downed. At the film's end—when the chemist disappears down the street with the world cheering his failure and the mill owner saying, "We've seen the last of him"—we know he will turn up again and invent something new that will be wonderful and give us more leisure. As amusing as the script and acting in "The Man in the White Suit" is the musical score written by Benjamin Frankel with its giddy blurp-blurp themes running right out of Guinness's chemical retorts.

ALSO from England but not quite up to former standards is the new Somerset Maugham package, "Encore." Like "Trio," it consists of three unrelated stories, each filmed independently of the others. The first, in which Roland Culver and Nigel Patrick play the title roles of "The Ant and the Grasshopper," is an amusing little parable but rather obvious in its O. Henry ending. The second, "Winter Cruise," consists mainly of a character sketch of a loquacious old maid —played to perfection by Kay Walsh, who gets even more out of the role than Maugham put in it.

The most serious plot of the three is in "Gigolo and Gigolette," which is about a woman high-diver who is overcome with fear and goes on with her act only to retain the love of her husband-manager. Glynis Johns plays this role, and it is only because of her that this short movie carries any conviction. As she is torn by love and fear, you suffer with her—but you see her shallow husband (Terence Morgan) for what he is. Maugham, the cynic, doesn't allow you to work up too much emotion for the girl herself or the unpleasant people around her. Director Harold French could have done more with the dangerous high-diving situation and with this pathetic, lonely performer portrayed by Miss Johns. In fact all of "Encore" lacks the depth promised as each story starts. If more stories by Mr. Maugham are to be used in films, I'd suggest that the producers start reading now and seek out the best.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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THE STAGE

THE BRASS RING

IRVING Elman's comedy about the yearnings of the middle-aged for the romantic freedoms they denied themselves as youngsters has already been withdrawn, and there were perfectly sound reasons for its general critical rejection. The author could not become serious without becoming platitudinous, his play bore an unfortunate resemblance to the much slicker "Point of No Return," and the physical production was so skimpy and immature as to defy the script to sustain illusion for long.

But I, at least, was sorry to see it go so quickly. Mr. Elman struck me as having an easy and engaging comic talent, an ability to treat an essentially light subject lightly, and I was perfectly willing to forgive him his gaucheries in exchange for the unruffled geniality with which he disposed of his characters' fatuous daydreams. We are in the habit of treating the loss of romance as a matter of profound torment, and it was pleasant to watch a writer wink gently at the whole business. Unfortunately, though the author was quick to puncture the sentimentality of our moonings over the girl we let slip from us, the Paris we never got to, the exuberant fling we never permitted ourselves, he himself turned sentimental in justifying our stay-at-home sobriety and thereby dissipated his basic effect.

While he was sticking to the subject, though, he managed a number of bright and ironic improvisations. I especially liked a self-pitying nightmare in which the fortyish hero imagined himself writhing at his conventional parents' feet in a home-made strait jacket; an interlude in a business office in which a novice was instructed in the ritual of incoming and outgoing paper work; and a somewhat more sober scene in which a father held in check the contempt he felt for his intolerably smug son. These episodes were, in addition, very attractively acted by Sidney Blackmer, Carol Goodner, Conrad Janis, Bethel Leslie, Patricia Benoit, and Fred Irving Lewis.

Director Stanley Gould seemed to me to do as well as was humanly possible within the limits set by Elfi von Kantzow's sketchy and constricted settings and the most unprofessional lighting I have seen in a long time. "The Brass Ring" had its points, and I hope next time Mr. Elman will be more successful in sustaining his tone. (*Closed at the Lyceum*)

WALTER KERR.

NEXT WEEK—
CHARLES MALIK
on the World's Undeveloped Areas

OF NOTE

AMERICAN RELIGIOUS LIFE

THE latest issue of *Cross Currents* (3111 Broadway, New York 37, N. Y.) carries an article on religious life in America which originally appeared in the German Catholic review *Hochland.* The article is written by Eugen Guerster, a German writer now living in the United States. The following is an excerpt:

> I think it is too early to speak (as Evelyn Waugh did in *Life*) of the American age of the Catholic Church. Is there a specifically American Catholicism? Yes and no. Every child knows that the dogmas and sacramental structure of the Catholic Church remain the same all over the world. And yet American Catholicism has a local coloring which cannot be ignored and which makes those who come from Europe very uneasy at first. Both Waugh and a French Catholic who writes for *Le Monde* under the name of George Escoulin, have pointed out that the Catholic Church in America has an Irish character and that Irish Catholics have a tendency to establish themselves as a closed social block. According to them, the American parish, particularly in the small towns, where church, school and rectory are a closed, self-sufficient unit over which the priest rules like a king, is characteristic of this block. It must be added that practically every responsible position at all levels of the Catholic school system is held by the clergy. In the Catholic colleges all important questions are decided more or less arbitrarily by the clergy without consulting the laymen on the faculty.
>
> Of course, the lack of a real peasant tradition with its colorful love of life and its serene, natural acceptance of death is very noticeable and decisive in the whole atmosphere of American Catholicism; there is no jubilant celebration of the Resurrection, no village midnight Mass, and only in New Orleans a gay carnival precedes the somberness of Ash Wednesday. Just as there is no such balancing tradition, there is no educated Catholic bourgeoisie which would be clearly aware of its social and intellectual mission, with the result that the clergy has something of a monopoly on culture and the aggressive and organizational powers come very much to the fore while the contemplative attitude is pushed into the background. (I heard a priest say, when a discussion leader pointed out certain religious problems of South America, "We must gear our machinery to that problem.")

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Since it is inevitable that the Catholic parishes in this country have to support themselves, it is obvious that this situation favors an energetic type of priest with administrative and financial ability. Time and again one sees how the urgent appeals to the financial generosity of the faithful, which seem to be part of every sermon, can only be painful for Europeans. An acquaintance, who had fled from Czechoslovakia at the moment of the Catholic persecutions, told me how upset he was when the priest stepped into the pulpit with a triumphant "Hallelujah" to tell the community that the last payment on the Church's mortgage had been made. It will seem strange to Europeans that recently the Bishop of Camden officially supported a certain candidate for the governorship, because he was the only one who favored the retention of Bingo, which is a fairly important source of income for the parishes.

In his essay Evelyn Waugh says that the Catholic colleges have set themselves the important task of creating an educated bourgeoisie among the children of proletarian immigrant families. Thomas Merton, who taught at such a college, is more skeptical in this respect. He observed that many of the Catholic students he met considered their world of material progress "the height of human achievement." These students seemed just as exposed to the temptation of believing that perfection depends on public opinion as the students of other colleges.

Once when I was lecturing in a Catholic college and mentioned that real culture is above all the primacy of the spiritual over the material, one of the listeners, obviously supported by his group, replied: "I envy you for being able to feel that way, but I can't. It is part of our make-up to try to get all these material conveniences"—and he began to mention cars, television sets and the newest washing machines. . . . It is symptomatic of the times and their spiritual climate that the desire to make their students efficient citizens in a business world has led even Catholic colleges to overstress the practical, to encourage specialized technical courses and to abandon impractical, purely scientific lectures which are unpopular with the realistic student body. In the announcement of one of the best Catholic colleges in Pennsylvania, I found all kinds of courses on bookkeeping, advertising and business administration, but not a single one on either the history of art and music or the cultural history of the Nineteenth Century.

"The American Church," Cardinal Gibbons said, "must of its nature be the same as in Rome or Jerusalem; but in the same manner in which its garb takes on the color of its surroundings, it must also be American." Escoulin was not the only one who noticed how readily the large majority of American Catholics has accepted the typically American values, prejudices and habits, how they too try to stand firmly, with both feet, in this reality which is fairly bursting with activity. Of course considerations of this kind should not keep us from realizing the demand which is being made at this historical moment on American Catholicism.

Its task is to put a stop to the growing disappearance of the Christian spirit in a naturally pragmatic country, and to bring about the realization that all things are impermanent in an atmosphere which exalts life from morning until night with the blessings of liberal theology. There is no sharper contrast, no better example possible, than the picture of a Good Friday afternoon on Fifth Avenue in front of the overcrowded St. Patrick's Cathedral: the traffic, the wild, pointless orgy of the rush hour, and the enormous crowds who want to participate in the ancient rites of the death of the Son of God, at least from the outside. At such a time faces suddenly seem to dare remove the masks of optimistic efficiency and allow the ancient suffering of the "anguished creature" to come to the surface.

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Three Score And Ten

COMPTON MACKENZIE

I WISH I could muster as much respectful emotion on entering my seventieth year as once upon a time the prospect of that magical double figure ten drawing closer every day evoked in my youthful heart. Never again to be able to contain one's age within a single numeral! Life would then begin at last.

I can remember standing in front of a mirror on my tenth birthday to meditate upon the reflection of maturity therein presented on an icy January morning sixty years ago. I doubt if thirteen provided a comparable sense of achievement, although thirteen was memorable, and I recapture from the past an emotion half compassionate, half contemptuous for twelve-year-olds. We missed in my youth the contemporary catchword "teen-agers;" I hope that modern youth enters "teen-agedness" with a suitably elated conviction of its own self-importance.

Nearly forty years ago Max Beerbohm, who is now halfway through his eightieth year, told me that it would give him pleasure to reach seventy because he should consider that every year he survived after the allotted span was a gift from fortune. Today the expectation of life is said to be longer. Nevertheless, in recent years I have lost so many old friends that I cannot be insensible of this extension of the allotted span, and I shall certainly not take for granted any years that may be allowed to me after seventy.

Probably I shall be speaking for most people of my age when I insist upon the fact that we feel no essential change in ourselves as we grow older. My thirtieth, fortieth, fiftieth and sixtieth years have all been entered without any notable change from the spirit in which I entered my twentieth. And now, on the threshold of seventy, I am just as rash, just as curious, just as industrious, just as fond of good company, good wine, good cigars and late hours, and even just as much of a minority man, though I find contemporary youth so much to my taste that if I be granted some of those extra years I may end as a majority man yet. In a word I am as much in love with life as I always have been.

A friend of mine, just sixty, announced recently in his newspaper column that he was on the downward slope of life. And what inspired this melancholy reflection? The discovery of his inability to climb up some mountain with the zest of once upon a time.

I hesitate to profane with my irreverence the sacred topic of athletic exercise, but I am old enough—yes, I really am old enough—to express a firm opinion that whatever disillusionment may accompany the old age of some men is nearly always due to what I consider their insensate devotion to physical activity after the body has begun to be weary of it. Far from condoling with my sexagenarian climber upon his intimations of debility, I congratulate him upon what I hope will henceforth be his freedom from the tyranny of exercise when he ought to be sitting in a chair, reading or writing or talking.

The exceptional man can still ride to hounds at eighty, but I doubt if such a man has taxed his mind overmuch in the course of a physically active life, and when the feebleness of the body at last asserts itself such a man will inevitably feel that life has lost its savor. But why a man with a rich intellectual and emotional life and a well-stored memory should feel old because he can no longer climb a mountain without puffing, or outplay Colonel Bogey on his local golf-links, passes my comprehension.

Why should an old man be ashamed of his deterioration at golf? *"Anno domini,* I'm afraid," he will mutter apologetically. But ask him to learn a new language or even to read a tough book, and he will be proud that his age gives him an excuse *not* to indulge in such intellectual energy. He is much more concerned about the treachery of his wrist than about the treachery of his memory. Indeed, I detect in many of my contemporaries what almost amounts to an unhealthy pride in the gradual fossilization of their minds.

THIS brings me to the advantage of a good memory. So many people lose most of the first, and by far the longest, decade of their lives by failing to preserve a continuous memory. Old men proverbially live in the past, but what a disjointed past it too often is! And because it contains so many gaps, such old men are apt to find themselves out of touch with the present, whereas if, by exercising the memory, they have throughout their lives made the past an external present, their minds will not age with their bodies.

It seems to me, though I may be wrong, that our present education neglects to promote that reverence for the living memory which is owed to it. Mnemosyne or Memory, the titan daughter of Heaven and Earth, was the mother of the nine Muses, and it is Mnemosyne whom Hesiod, in one of his Homeric hymns, makes Hermes salute first of all the immortals. I cannot believe that Mnemosyne would have been much interested in the snippets of information which contemporary

Mr. Mackenzie is the noted British novelist and essayist.

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fashion demands from memory. It was with the deliberate intention of honoring Mnemosyne that, except during two years of intensive travel, I have never kept a diary. I suspect that nothing is more destructive of the kind of memory that the Muses inherited from their mother than a diary, unless of course the diarist be a Pepys whose diary is the creative life of his imagination, and therefore as such able to preserve the living past in an eternal present.

Any man entering his seventieth year, be he townsman or countryman, must ask himself whether the present-day child can retain so sharp an impression of childhood as he does. That question will have to be answered by somebody reminiscing in January 2021. Yet, I will hazard my opinion that in such an unimaginable year of the future all sorts of things which people of my age regard through a distracting blur of noise, color, height, and speed, will emerge touched by the enchantment of distance as vivid experiences of the youthful mind today.

I base this conviction on the sharp impact New York made upon me in my thirtieth year. I daresay New York in 1912 would have seemed just a blur of noise, color, height, and speed if I had been born in 1843. Of course, it *is* fantastic for me to walk along Kensington High Street today, or for that matter Piccadilly, Regent Street or the Strand, and recall what they were sixty-five years ago. That is where the countryman scores. He may miss the smock-frocks and the gleaners and the wagons, but the essential country scene is what it was once upon a time.

But of Kensington High Street and Hammersmith Road practically nothing is left of my childhood, not even the old milestone that said "London 4 miles Hounslow 7 miles." How incredible it seems now that on May Day morning the chimney-sweeps used to dance down the middle of the road in wicker-cages covered with leaves—Jacks-in-the-Green with the centuries behind them to remind us that once there was a Maypole in the Strand. The old cries of London were still heard —"Cherry ripe" in summer's prime, "Any knives or scissors to grind?", "Any pots, pans or kettles to mend?", "Catch 'em alive-o" by a man wearing a top-hat surrounded by a fly-paper, or with so sweet a melancholy "Who'll buy my lavender?" at summer's dusty end. Gypsy caravans as brightly colored as a bouquet of flowers, with swarthy beauties wearing ostrich-plumed hats, would pass slowly by, returning to pick up the dark man with earrings who sat on the top of the area steps mending a cane-seated chair. Can it be true that at the age of five I was always fearful lest the gypsies in London should steal me away and stain my body with walnut juice?

And then the beggars! When I hear some of my contemporaries deploring the sins of the welfare state I wonder how clearly they remember the beggars of their youth. Foreigners used to be horrified by what they felt was the brutal indifference of London in the eighties to human misery and suffering. No child sees those mutilated or starving spectres of humanity today, but some of us who saw them have not forgotten them, and so we are able to feel less indignant about the expense of social amelioration.

But it is when I conjure up the external appearance of the familiar surroundings of sixty-five years ago that I begin to realize that indeed I am entering my seventieth year. I look back to the sight of a half-finished Olympia, to old two-storied country-houses with gardens in front a hundred yards long reaching to wicket gates opening on Hammersmith Road, to the mulberry-garden that was the playground of my prep-school, and to the sea of orchard blossom on either side of the road beyond Chiswick, by which the old green horse-tram jogged slowly from Hammersmith Broadway to Kew Bridge. However, it is pleasant—or unpleasant—to reflect that the traffic problem was nearly as acute in the eighties as it is today. The only unbroken progress between Kensington and, say, Liverpool Street Station was along Birdcage Walk, just as today the only unbroken progress is along the Mall which swallowed it up, and you always allowed for a block of at least twenty minutes at the Mansion House.

IN my fourteenth year I read, without a keen appreciation of its excellence, *Cicero De Senectute*—Cicero on Old Age—a good example of the way Latin and Greek were too often spoilt for us by the unimaginative choice of desiccated schoolmasters. Cicero was writing at a time when the prospect for civilization seemed as menacing and dark as it seems to us, and now, with a greater capacity for understanding his observations about old age than I possessed at thirteen, I find it a tranquil and reassuring thesis, though poor old Cicero himself met a violent end.

There is only one notable privilege of old age which he omitted to mention, and I cherish it so dearly that were I the best of golfers I would sacrifice my prowess with eagerness in order to attain it. That privilege—indeed it is more than a privilege, it is a luxury—that luxury is to escape not from the fevers of love nor from the ache of ambition but from sea-sickness.

Believe me, you bad sailors who are still in middle-age and have to make journeys by sea, that the greatest luxury of old-age is freedom from sea-sickness. When a man in his seventieth year can stand on a reeling deck and survey with surprise the effect that the waves are having upon his fellow-voyagers, then indeed he can say with Sir Thomas Browne: "In seventy years, a man may have a deep gust of the world; know what it is, what it can afford, and what 'tis to have been a man."

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A Brother Betrayed

INVISIBLE MAN. By Ralph Ellison. Random House. $3.50.

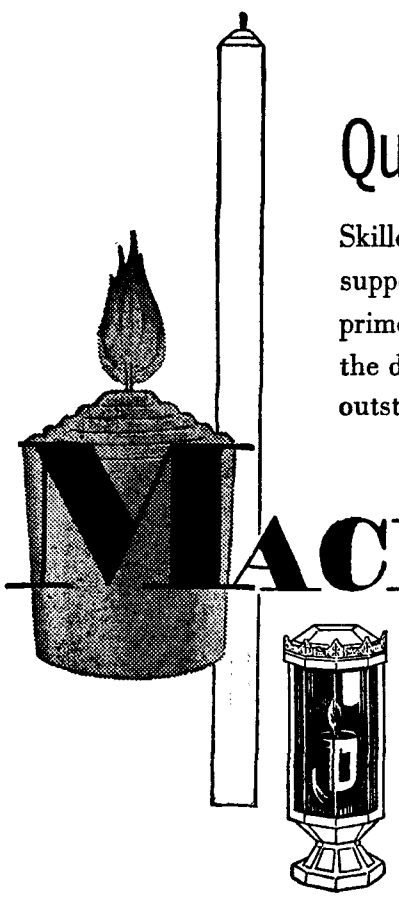
By T. E. CASSIDY

YOU meet the hero of this novel in his underground home. Then you go back to whence he came. He is the offspring of a Southern college for Negroes. He has left there, though he loved it, because he took Mr. Norton, a benevolent white trustee, around the region and showed him that which he should not have seen: the seamy, dreadful slums and bums of his race. Dr. Bledsoe, the pious old fraud who is the president, is enraged, and dismisses the boy (with letters of introduction to other benevolent trustees) to find work up North. He finds himself emerging from underground into Harlem. He distributes the letters, finally, and nothing happens, save a further introduction to a nightmare in a factory. Actually the truth is that in the letters, Dr. Bledsoe, in righteous prose, has done him in.

He is bewildered and befriended, in rapid succession. Mary, a benign elderly lady, takes him in. When he finds his work in the factory, he is set upon by his surroundings and his fellow men. Then, one day, he witnesses an eviction of some old people, his own black people. He finds out, when he bursts out in angry speech at this outrage, that he is powerful and persuasive; that people will listen, urge him to talk further, and themselves be urged to action. He is pursued by 'Brother Jack' of the 'Brotherhood,' signs up, goes in training, and returns to the beginning of triumph and horror as a member of the movement, a Brother in the Brotherhood, and a leader who discovers that his power is an overwhelming, obsessive tumult.

He is entangled beyond belief. He sees blacks and whites *versus* blacks for the seizure of all the blacks. His various brothers, both colors, and his enemies, both colors, ride him and lead him and follow him and almost destroy him, until, finally, he and 'Ras the Exhorter' are throwing spears at each other, literally, in one mad street scene where Ras, the leader of the all-blacks-for-blacks, is astride a horse, with shield, headgear, and lance, charging, raging, and exhorting all the while.

Ralph Ellison's invisible man is really many men. He is not only the embodiment of the Negro race. He is the conscience of all races. He is the result of both conscious and unconscious torture, one man to another. He is the horror of history, the triumphant yell of bitter fate. He is blasted hope, and he is also the revived spirit. He is the mad leader and the blind follower. He is rampant, and his rampage starts in



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the sky and ends in a coal pit. His light is the light of God, and the light of 1,369 bulbs, stolen from Monopolated Light and Power. He, himself, is pure power and smashed power. And he is probably, in some way, you.

This is a novel of violence, to be sure. It is a novel written with force and fire, but it is a novel, too, that sputters sometimes, almost as if the author were unwilling to write well when his invisible man shows signs of becoming visible. It has surging scenes and fantastically detailed characterizations. Even when the man leads in the Brotherhood, *he* is the driven. In public meetings and in committee meetings, he is the blisterer, but also the blistered. He drifts back and forth, in and out of the movement—at its core and at its fringes. He has great theories and insane practices. And the violence erupts regularly, be it in the form of special self-torture through the mind, or in the madness of the scene in which the man is disgusted and degraded by an invitation to rape, or in the almost epic proportions of the final riot in the book.

One might select a continual underlying theme: betrayal. The man is betrayed at the very beginning by his own blacks and by whites, to whom he is an object to be either eliminated or used for fun. He is betrayed by his college president and by the trustee. He is betrayed by the factory bosses and the workers, and, most blazingly, by his Brothers. Yet all the time, he is the one who is accused of being the betrayer—just as he has always been the driven. Perhaps this is the greatest single moving feature of this sprawling work: the invisible man's inability to belong, visibly, on any level of existence. He is always forced to dig in, to fight, to hide, to pretend to be another, and finally to disappear. But despite everything that happens he is willing, at the end, to reappear.

Ellison stands somewhat alone as a novelist. He is not a Richard Wright yet, but really he is quite different. He is more diffuse, more introspective, but somehow less powerful. He is more dramatic, perhaps, but less compelling. He blends the weird and the warm, the grotesque and the appealing, often with fine effect, so that if your attention wanders, it always comes back. You must call him, finally and simply, dynamic.

Life of a Layman-Theologian

THE LIFE OF BARON VON HUGEL. By Michael de la Bedoyere. Scribners. $5.

By THEODORE MAYNARD

MICHAEL de la Bedoyère, the editor of the *Catholic Herald* of London, has written what may be better biographies than the one now before me. But perhaps I ought to make the qualification that his previous tasks were a good deal easier. In his book on St. Catherine of Siena, for example, he had all the printed sources available, and within a smaller compass than now, he could comment and interpret, which he did with great brilliance. This time he is obliged to forego anything except what the subject demanded—the careful use of many previously unpublished letters and diaries, the just and delicate treatment of the modernist movement, and finally the handling of the Baron's own writings.

The literary style of this Austro-Scot can be very impressive when one gets into the swing of it in his *Mystical Element of Religion* and his other books, but as most of the many quotations made here are drawn from unstudied letters, they seem a bit craggy even for one so German in temperament. However, the total effect is very rewarding, for one does get to see clearly into the mind of a man at once independent and humble, erudite and childlike. In all of which Mr. de la Bedoyère keeps himself so far as possible out of the picture.

The main theme is that of the Baron's relations with the modernists, the Abbé Loisy and Father Tyrrell. The first of these admitted after his excommunication that he had long ceased to be a real believer, though he retained a great respect for the Church and though the Baron never ceased to pray for his return. Tyrrell was in a somewhat different case. A large part of his trouble was due to his headlong and impetuous disposition; he always maintained that he was a perfectly good Catholic, and, though he never made a formal recantation, he was given the last sacraments on his death-bed, but was not permitted by the Bishop of Southwark to receive Christian burial. Von Hügel remained their friend but escaped their condemnation.

The Baron had an immense influence on all kinds of minds inside and outside the Church. For some odd reason Mr. de la Bedoyère does not so much as mention the poem addressed to him by W. B. Yeats. The Anglican Bishop Gore called him, "the most learned man living" (this though von Hügel had never had much formal education) and the future Archbishop Temple of Canterbury thought *The Mystical Element* "the most important theological work written in the English language during the last half-century." The Baron would not have waved aside such tributes in false-modesty; but he was amused and embarrassed when the *Times Literary Supplement* described him as "a great apologist of the Roman Catholic Church." On this his comment was: "A dog who is quietly conscious of being a dog, and of having striven just to be a dog, and nothing more or other, may be allowed, perhaps, to feel some perplexity amidst his gratitude upon finding himself first prize among cats."

Von Hügel's interests were all centered in the spiritual life, and he always held back prospective converts until, of their own accord, they had reached the conviction that they could stay outside only under the penalty of grave sin. As a solid and temperate piece of scholarship *The Life of Baron von Hügel* must be strongly recommended to serious students.

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Portrait of Violence

A MATTER OF CONSCIENCE. Werner Bergengruen. Thames and Hudson. $3.

By RICHARD HAYES

IT is at once the virtue and the defect of Werner Bergengruen's novel to assume a burden of philosophic inquiry which traditionally lies outside the fictional province. A virtue, this, because in a time of minor success and small ambition one must salute the artist who restores to the novel some measure of intellectual vigor. But also a defect, when, as in *A Matter of Conscience,* the dialectic is never fully absorbed into the narrative, remaining peripheral rather than central to the novel's major movement, supporting but not informing the large, elaborately wrought dramatic structure.

Bergengruen's method is allegory, and his intention explicitly religious: "to diminish our faith in the perfection of man." Against the Renaissance background of a princely Italian state, he has drawn a sombre and insistent parable of universal moral complication: the image of a natural order ruptured by violence, and drawing in its wake disaster and spiritual anarchy.

A murder is its point of departure —a murder which disturbs the pattern of civil and ecclesiastical life. To the Grand Prince, it serves as a pretext for Machiavellian observation on the nature of power, authority and will. To his henchman Nespoli, and those who fall within the orbit of suspicion, it is a potential threat to personal security, which ultimately envelops everyone in a climate of guile and deceit. The lines of suggestion and meaning which radiate from this incident converge at last in a scene of great force and moral beauty, in which, as the literal action recedes, Bergengruen examines with singular insight the tainted and fallible sources of human conduct.

Like several of his gifted contemporaries—Sartre in particular, Camus to a degree—Bergengruen illustrates freshly the situation of the novelist who chooses to operate

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without benefit of sensibility. The novel, in his hands, is not so much a spontaneous response to the world of physical actuality, as it is a kind of vehicle of moral discovery. The virtues of his mind—its gravity and sobriety, its reflective cast, its predilection for the moral maxim or *pensée*—are traditionally those of the European man of letters; they bear only an incidental relation to the novelist's essential task of conveying a specific quantity of *felt* human experience.

As fiction, *A Matter of Conscience* suffers crucially from this deficiency. Its background is curiously muted and remote; its characters break through their frozen ritual of movement only intermittently, and even then rarely succeed in imposing themselves upon us. Above all, the moral world of the novel is too cool and reasonable: Bergengruen has infused it with none of that secret malignancy, that luminous chiaroscuro of passion and treachery which is so vividly sensed in the work of Graham Greene and M. Mauriac.

When one has registered disappointment with this novel, however, and underscored its defects, something still remains to be said for Werner Bergengruen and the impression he leaves of a large, free and humane spirit. In a time of casual despair and gratuitous affirmation, he exhibits a kind of dignity and wisdom which are never easily bought: dignity and wisdom which make this novel—whatever its literary insufficiency—truly consequential. Even in so faltering an execution, one can detect, however remotely, the noble design.

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REVIEWERS

T. E. Cassidy is doing advanced studies at Columbia University.

Theodore Maynard has written numerous biographies of saints and Catholic historical figures.

Richard Hayes, who attended St. Peter's College and Columbia, writes criticism for several Catholic publications.

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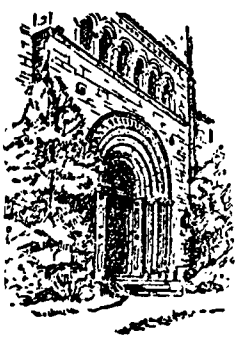

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